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# NASA Procedural Requirements

**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY****NPR 3100.1A**Effective Date: March 09,  
2007Expiration Date: March 09,  
2012[Printable Format \(PDF\)](#)[Request Notification of Change](#) (NASA Only)

## **Subject: Management of the Senior Executive Service (SES)**

**Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management**[| TOC](#) | [ChangeHistory](#) | [Preface](#) | [Chapter1](#) | [Chapter2](#) | [Chapter3](#) | [Chapter4](#) | [AppendixA](#) |  
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## **Chapter 4 Policy Implementation**

### **4.1 SES Recruiting and Selection**

Initial appointments will be made on the basis of merit through a competitive selection process. NPR 3317 covers merit staffing within the SES.

### **4.2 SES Performance Management**

NASA's Performance Management Plan for the SES is designed to enhance the achievement of Agency goals by encouraging managerial excellence in individual and organizational performance. It also facilitates a systematic eligibility for performance awards and retention in the SES. The PRB reviews documentation relating to initial ratings, any recommended alterations, and comments prior to recommending final performance ratings and bonuses. The Administrator considers the recommendations of the PRB and SEC in determining final performance ratings and bonuses. NPR 3435 covers performance management in the SES.

### **4.3 SES Pay**

4.3.1 General. The level of pay of an executive should be a reflection of the responsibilities of the position and the qualifications, performance, and contributions of the executive. Agencies are expected to utilize the full SES salary range.

4.3.2 Initial Pay Setting. Initial appointments will be made at the lowest practicable rate of pay. Current General Schedule employees promoted to an SES position may receive an appropriate increase in pay, normally six percent. Proposed salaries exceeding this level must be justified based on appropriate factors, such as the scope and impact of the position, the special or unique qualifications of the selectee, or competing salary offers. Employees occupying Senior Scientific and Technical (ST) or Senior Level (SL) positions may be given an increase in pay upon appointment to the SES if the duties of the position and the employee's qualifications relative to the position warrant it. The salary of a selectee from the private sector will be set at the lowest practicable level, taking into account the responsibilities of the position to be filled, the experience and qualifications of the selectee and anticipated contributions, the relative difficulty in filling the position with a highly qualified individual, and the selectee's current salary.

4.3.3 Tier Positions. A limited number of executives (approximately 25 percent of the incumbents within an organization or Center and across NASA) may be paid above the salary for Executive Level (EX) III, not to exceed EX II. These salaries are reserved for the very highest performers occupying key positions who are making the greatest contributions to Agency success. This salary range is divided into three approximately equivalent Tiers, defined by the types of positions considered appropriate for each category. The actual salary amounts for each Tier will be determined annually. A description of the Tiers is in Appendix B.

4.3.3.1 Generally, only employees at or near a salary of EX-III may be considered for promotion to a Tier salary,

based on the importance of the position as well as individual performance and contributions to mission success. Promotions to and between Tiers will be considered during the annual performance review process.

4.3.3.2 The Administrator must approve any pay action involving a salary above EX III.

4.3.3.3 The fact that a position meets a Tier definition does not require that the position be designated as a Tier position, nor does it entitle an incumbent to a Tier salary.

4.3.3.4 Promotion of a current executive into a Tier position or to a higher Tier requires an "Outstanding" performance rating during the most recent performance appraisal period.

4.3.3.5 Although the assignment to a Tier is based largely on the position, the expectation is that an individual paid at a Tier salary would continue to occupy positions of equal stature in the future and continue to perform at the highest level.

4.3.4 Adjusting Pay. Generally, SES pay may be adjusted no more than once in a 12-month period. 5 C.F.R. S 534.404(c)(4) provides for waivers of this restriction in certain circumstances; the approval of the Administrator or designee is required.

4.3.4.1 Adjustments in pay will be made based on demonstrated individual performance and contributions to organizational and mission success. A decrease in pay must be based on reasons of poor performance or conduct and requires a 15-day written notice in advance of the effective date.

4.3.4.2 As part of the annual performance management process, the Administrator or designee will authorize pay increases for executives. Unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator, the following range of performance-based increases is authorized, based on a final performance rating approved by the Administrator (rounded to the nearest dollar):

Rating	Non-Tier	Tier
Outstanding	4-6%	Inc. up to top of Tier
Highly Successful	% inc. to EX-III up to 4%	Inc. up to top of Tier
Fully Successful	0% up to % inc. to EX-III	0% up to % inc. to EX-III
Below Fully Successful	0%	0%

Increases less than the maximum rate authorized are appropriate if a larger increase would cause the executive's salary to exceed EX-III (for non-Tier positions), or would be inconsistent with the salary structure established at a Center or within a Headquarters Office for different organizational levels. Increases greater than these amounts must be approved by the Administrator, based on appropriate justification by the EPM regarding the level of performance and/or contribution of the executive. Increases above EX-III are allowable only for individuals who currently occupy Tier positions.

4.3.4.3 Executives who meet all of the following criteria may receive a performance-based increase effective the first pay period in January:

1. Have completed the one-year SES probationary period.
2. Have completed at least 120 days under an approved SES performance plan.
3. Have received an official rating of record of at least Fully Successful as approved by the Administrator.
4. Have not received an increase in the last 12 months.

4.3.4.4 Executives with less than 12 months in the SES:

1. Who entered the SES before June 3 of the previous calendar year and receive an official rating of record of at least Fully Successful as approved by the Administrator may receive a performance-based increase when they have completed their probationary period (for limited term SES, when they complete one year in the SES). Probationary SES members may receive an increase to maintain their position in the rate range under 5 C.F.R. S 534.404(b)(4)

provided the EPM documents that their performance meets or exceeds expectations, based on an approved SES performance plan; however, a subsequent performance-based increase upon completion of the probationary period is limited to the difference between the maximum performance-based increase allowed, and the increase under 5 C.F.R. S 534.404(b)(4).

2. Who entered the SES after June 3 but before October 1 of the previous calendar year may receive an increase to maintain their position in the rate range under 5 C.F.R. S 534.404(b)(4) provided the EPM documents that their performance meets or exceeds expectations, based on an approved SES performance plan; they are not eligible for any additional performance-based increase. An executive paid in a Tier may receive such an increase only if the Administrator approves the increase together with either an official rating of record of Outstanding for at least a 120-day period, or a Highly Successful rating for at least a 120-day period together with a documented exceptionally meritorious accomplishment.

3. Who entered the SES on October 1 or later are not eligible for either of the above increases.

4.3.4.5 Executives who received a pay increase within the last 12 months may receive a pay increase effective the first pay period in January (or other effective date of an adjustment to the minimum or maximum rate of basic pay for the SES rate range) as follows:

1. Executives who received an increase before June 3 may receive an additional increase to maintain their position in the rate range under 5 C.F.R. S 534.404(b)(4). An executive paid in a Tier may receive such an increase only if the Administrator approves the increase and an official rating of record of Outstanding for the rating period ending September 30, or a Highly Successful rating together with an exceptionally meritorious accomplishment.

2. Executives who received an increase on or after June 3 may receive an increase only with the Administrator's approval, if otherwise permitted in regulations. However, a minimal increase is authorized if the executive's pay otherwise would fall below the range for the authorized Tier level.

3. If a performance-based increase was granted within the last 12 months, e.g., upon completion of the probationary period or due to other delay in granting such increases, the 12-month rule under 5 C.F.R. S 534 is waived, in order to align an executive's subsequent performance-based pay adjustment to the performance cycle.

4.3.4.6 An executive reassigned to a position with greater responsibilities may be considered for an increase in pay. The executive's most recent performance rating, current pay, and earlier pay adjustments will be factored into the decision. The Administrator's approval is required to waive the 12-month rule and to approve a Tier salary. Unless the position was approved previously for a Tier 1 or 2, such increases normally will be considered by the PRB during the annual performance review.

4.3.4.7 Unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator or designee, the pay of an employee returning to a General Schedule (GS) position from a limited term or limited emergency SES appointment will be set at the rate that would have been in effect had the employee remained in the GS position, including any within-grade increases to which the employee would have been entitled.

## **4.4 SES Presidential Rank Awards, Bonuses, and Incentive Awards (cash and time-off from duty)**

SES members will be considered for all awards and bonuses for which they are eligible under Federal law and OPM guidelines, and consideration will be based on performance rather than position. The Administrator is the final approval authority for SES Presidential Rank Award nominations to OPM, bonuses, and cash incentive awards, unless otherwise delegated (incentive awards only).

## **4.5 SES Executive Development**

NASA will provide an effective program framework and the required resources for the systematic development and continuous professional growth of its senior executives. NASA and its executives share the responsibility for identifying individual development needs and obtaining the training, education, and development experiences to meet those needs. Pursuant to its responsibility, NASA provides residential in-house executive education, financial, and logistics support for academic executive education programs, and arrangements for developmental work assignments.

## **4.6 SES Ethical Standards**

SES members will maintain and be held to the absolute highest level of ethics. Every member of the SES is entrusted with the senior management and execution of programs established by our national leadership. SES members must receive annual ethics briefings, supplemented with additional training as required. SES members

must complete a public financial disclosure report annually, as well as when entering and leaving the SES.

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